

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12120

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CGEN, SHUM, UR, US
SUBJECT: SOVIET PENTECOSTALS ASK AID IN LEAVING USSR

REF: (A) STATE 116545, (B) MOSCOW 10588

1. SUMMARY: GROWING DIFFICULTIES FOR UNREGISTERED PENTECOSTAL COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE USSR ENCOURAGED PROMINENT PENTECOSTAL LEADERS TO SEEK EMBASSY ASSISTANCE AT THE OFFICES OF KIEV ADVANCE PARTY. VISITORS CONFIRMED PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORTING OF OFFICIAL PERSECUTION, AND THE RESULTING CAMPAIGN FOR EMIGRATION AMONG THESE SOVIET CHRISTIANS. END SUMMARY.

2. FIVE SOVIET PENTECOSTALS, REPRESENTING GROUPS IN THE UKRAINE, GEORGIA, AND THE SOVIET FAR EAST, CAME TO THE OFFICES OF THE US CONSULATE GENERAL'S ADVANCE PARTY ON MAY 22, 1978, AND SUBMITTED DETAILED STATEMENTS REGARDING THEIR MEMBERSHIP, THEIR ATTEMPTS TO EMIGRATE FROM THE USSR, THE AUTHORITIES' ATTEMPTS TO TRY PENTECOSTALISTS AS CRIMINALS, AND LOCAL NEWSPAPER CAMPAIGNS AIMED
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AGAINST THE GROUPS. A FULL AIRGRAM REPORT WITH THE DOCUMENTATION IS BEING POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT (EUR/ SOV).

3. THE PENTECOSTAL GROUP, LED BY NIKOLAY PETROVICH GORETOY, HAD BEEN PLANNING TO VISIT KAP OFFICES FOR SOME TIME, BUT THE ORLOV CONVICTION PROMPTED THEM TO

COME IMMEDIATELY. RECOUNTING MANY INCIDENTS OF THREATS, BEATINGS, FAMILY SEPARATIONS, AND PENDING CRIMINAL CHARGES, THE PENTECOSTALISTS FEAR THE ORLOV CONVICTION BODES VERY BADLY FOR THEM AND DISSENTERS OF ALL SORTS IN THE SOVIET UNION. A. Y. ANISCHENKO, A LEADER OF THE GEORGIA SECT, SAID LOCAL OFFICIALS TOLD HIM SEVERAL TIMES THE PENTECOSTALS' FATE IS DECIDED AT THE KREMLIN. ONLY AT THAT LEVEL WILL THE MATTER OF EMIGRATION PERMISSION BE DECIDED, HE WAS TOLD.

4. ON THE BASIS OF THE ABOVE AND BELIEVING IN THE UNITED STATES' SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, THE PENTECOSTALS VOICED AN APPEAL TO PRESIDENT CARTER, THE US CONGRESS, AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO SUPPORT THEM AND GAIN THEM EXIT PERMISSION FROM THE SOVIET UNION. SPECIFICALLY, THE PENTECOSTAL GROUP ASKED THAT THE USG TAKE UP SOVIET PENTECOSTALS' HOPE TO EMIGRATE WITH THE KREMLIN AT THE VERY HIGHEST LEVEL. THEY BELIEVE THAT ONLY TALKS AT THAT LEVEL WOULD BE EFFECTIVE IN EFFECTING THEIR DEPARTURE FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

5. THEY ASKED ALSO FOR A LARGE-SCALE WESTERN MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO MAKE KNOWN THEIR TERRIBLY UNFORTUNATE SITUATION IN THE SOVIET UNION. THE PENTECOSTALS DESPERATELY BELIEVE SUCH PUBLICITY WILL BE THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN BE SAVED FROM THE WORST IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN THE SOVIET

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UNION. FINALLY, THEY ASKED THAT THE USG, WESTERN CHURCHES, AND THE WESTERN NEWS MEDIA DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO SEND NEW VYZOVS TO SOVIET PENTECOSTALS.

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